

# LE BULLETIN

**l'Institut Simone de Beauvoir Institute**

# NEWSLETTER

Vol. 3, No. 4  
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Université Concordia  
Concordia University

## THE MEANING OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AT CONCORDIA

(reprinted from the 1981-82 Calendar)

Women's Studies encompass and modify all areas of knowledge. Through the introduction of new perspectives and new research, this field of study helps to correct and complete the traditional scholarly record. It is in essence interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary since the specificity of the condition of women embraces all existing disciplines. It thus questions the concept and structures of knowledge contained within the disciplinary boundaries and contributes to bringing about a reunification of the knowledge and scholarship that has become increasingly fragmented.

The objectives of programmes in Women's Studies may be summarized as follows: to raise fundamental questions about women in society, using a scientific and academic approach; to stimulate interest in and support of research topics relevant to women and social change; to investigate our socio-political and cultural backgrounds and their effect on the status of women; to engage in a continuous evaluation of research into the history, conditions and changing needs of women; to promote the understanding of the historical and contemporary role of women in society; to encourage a new and full recognition of the contribution of women to human achievement; to ensure that women and issues of gender are studied in a non-discriminatory manner as part of the curriculum either in separate distinguishable Women's Studies courses or in courses so modified as to give women's perspective its rightful place; to strengthen and widen women's rights by providing the conditions which allow women to exercise those rights; to ensure the equality of all individuals without distinction of race, sex, age, language or religion and thus transform society.

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WOMEN'S STUDIES COURSES - 1981 - 82

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- SDEB C301/4      The Fellows' Seminar (3 credits)  
Special Topic: Simone de Beauvoir  
 SGW Campus: Wednesdays, 18:05 - 20:10 Mair Verthuy, Edmond Egan
- WMNS C290/2      Women's Identity and Image: Historic Approaches (3 credits)  
 SGW Campus: Mondays, 18:05 - 20:10 Sheila McDonough  
 Loyola Campus, TTh, 11:45 - 13:00 Rose Tekel
- WMNS C291/4      Women's Identity and Image: Recent Approaches (3 credits)  
 SGW Campus: Mondays, 18:05 - 20:10 Rose Tekel  
 SGW Campus: TTh, 10:45 - 11:30 Lucie Lequin (taught in French)  
 Loyola Campus: TTh, 11:45 - 13:00 Rose Tekel
- WMNS C390/2      Selected Topics in Women's Studies (3 credits)  
Special Topic: Création Littéraire au Féminin I  
 SGW Campus: TTh 18:05 - 20:10 Louky Bersianik  
 (Section AA)
- WMNS C390/4      Selected Topics in Women's Studies (3 credits)  
Special Topic: TBA  
 SGW Campus: Thursdays, 18:05 - 20:10 TBA  
 (Section BB)  
 Note: Students who have credit for C390 will register for C391
- WMNS C491/2      Seminar in Women's Studies I & II (3 credits)  
 C492/4      Special Topic: Women Working  
 SGW Campus: Tuesdays, 18:05 - 20:10, Kathy Waters, Susan Drysdale
- CINE C329/2      Women and Film (3 credits)  
 SGW Campus: Fridays, 13:05 - 16:05 Jacqueline Levitin
- ECON C397/4      Economics of Discrimination (3 credits)  
 SGW Campus: Thursdays, 18:05 - 20:10 Morton Stelcner
- EDUC C321/2      Sex Role Socialization in the School (3 credits)  
 SGW Campus: Wednesdays, 11:45 - 14:35 J. Barakett-Brand
- ENGL C249/2      Women in Literature I (3 credits)  
 Loyola Campus: TTh, 10:15 - 11:30 Kathy Waters  
 (Section 01)
- ENGL C250/4      Women in Literature II (3 credits)  
 Loyola Campus: TTh, 10:15 - 11:30 Kathy Waters  
 (Section 01)
- ENGL C251/2      Selected Topics in Literature Written by Women I (3 credits)  
Special Topic: The Voice of Women in 19th Century Fiction  
 SGW Campus: Tuesdays, 16:05 - 17:55 Roslyn Belkin



ENGL C252/4	<u>Selected Topics in Literature Written by Women II (3 credits)</u> <u>Special Topic: The Voice of Women in 20th Century Fiction</u> SGW Campus: Tuesdays, 16:05 - 17:55 Roslyn Belkin
FRAN C312/2	<u>Le Français des sciences sociales I: vocabulaire de la condition féminine (3 crédits)</u> Campus: SGW: Tuesdays, 18:05 - 20:10 (Section AA)
FRAN C313/4	<u>Le Français des sciences sociales II: vocabulaire de la condition féminine (3 crédits)</u> Campus SGW: Tuesdays, 18:05 - 20:10 TBA (Section AA)
FRAN C451/2	<u>La Littérature québécoise au féminin (3 crédits)</u> Campus SGW: Mondays, 18:05 - 20:10 Mair Verthuy
HIST C318/3	<u>Women in Western Civilization (6 credits)</u> SGW Campus: Tuesdays, 20:25 - 22:30 TBA
PHIL C230/4	<u>Human Identity (3 credits)</u> SGW Campus: Tuesdays, 16:05 - 17:55 Edmond Egan (Section AA)
POLI C334/3	<u>Women and the Law (6 credits)</u> SGW Campus: Tuesdays 18:05 - 20:10 Susan Altschul
PSYC C390/3	<u>Sexual Differentiation (6 credits)</u> <del>SGW</del> Campus: MW, 13:15 - 14:30 Elizabeth Henrik
RELI C333/2	<u>Women and Religion I (3 credits)</u> SGW Campus: TTh 11:45 - 13:00 Sheila McDonough
RELI C334/4	<u>Women and Religion II (3 credits)</u> SGW Campus: TTh 11:45 - 13:00 Sheila McDonough
SOCI C372/3	<u>Sociology of Sex Roles (3 credits)</u> Loyola Campus: TTh, 13:15 - 14:30 TBA
SOCI C372/3	<u>Sociology of Sex Roles (6 credits)</u> SGW Campus: MW 14:45 - 16:00 & Mondays 18:05 - 20:10 Susan Russell



The following courses may be taken as part of the Women's Studies programme with prior written permission of the Women's Studies Advisor.

- ANTH C397/2      Status of Women in Cross-Cultural Perspective I (3 credits)  
SGW Campus: Mondays, 20:25 - 22:30 TBA
- ANTH C398/4      Status of Women in Cross-Cultural Perspective II (3 credits)  
SGW Campus: Mondays, 20:25 - 22:30 TBA
- ESL C290/2      Special Topics in Communication (3 credits)  
Special Topic: The Women's Movement  
SGW Campus: TTh, 13:15 - 14:30 Molly Petrie
- MANA C499/2      Management: The Women's Perspective (3 credits)  
SGW Campus: Mondays, 18:05 - 20:10 Rejeanne Lalonde
- PSYC C226/2      Selected Topics in Personality A (3 credits)  
Special Topic: Mother-Infant Attachment: Implications for Normal Development  
SGW Campus: Mondays, 18:05 - 20:10 Barbara Woodside (Section AA)
- PSYC C227/2      Selected Topics in Personality B (3 credits)  
Special Topics: Aspects of Female Sexuality  
Loyola Campus: MW, 16:15 - 17:30 Elizabeth Henrik (Section 01)
- RELI C391/4      Special Topics in the History of Religion I (3 credits)  
Special Topic: Jewish Women in Jewish History  
Saidye Bronfman Centre: Mondays, 9:30 - 12:30 Norma Joseph (Section B)
- RELI C395/2      Special Topics in Judaism I (3 credits)  
Special Topic: Women in Jewish Law & Practice  
Saidye Bronfman Centre: Tuesdays, 20:30 - 22:30 Norma Joseph (Section ZI)

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Welcome to the new academic year. The Institute is all set for another round of activity; this year promises to be even more exciting than those which have gone before. In the Women's Studies Programme, we have some new course offerings (you will see that we have now moved into English as a second language as well as French as a second language) and we have revamped some of our existing courses (we should like to draw your attention particularly to the exciting new format of the Advanced Seminar). The Institute is also offering the Fellows' Seminar for the first time in its history, and, appropriately enough, the topic in the first year will be Simone de Beauvoir herself and her place in feminist theory. As you can see, the programme is developing very well with a strengthened core and greater freedom of choice in the satellite courses.

Our co-curricular activities are also extremely important. Planning is required now if we are to repeat last year's success and we rely again on your cooperation. Our major project remains, however, the International Conference on Teaching and Research Related To Women, which was approved by the Institute Council in October 1980, and which will take place under the aegis of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute in the summer of 1982. More information about the Conference is given elsewhere in the Newsletter, and we shall be soon inviting all members to a meeting to discuss what is happening and to share information and concerns. This is a very exciting undertaking for the Institute and its members and we hope you will take advantage of this unique opportunity.

We really do want you to become as involved as possible in planning and organizing the activities of the Institute. Shortly, your last year's representatives will be organizing elections for vacant positions in all committees, and I should like to add my voice to their's urging you to take an active part in those elections and in our work.

If you have any questions about the Women's Studies Programme, about the Institute, about the University, we shall be delighted to try to help you. The Institute has a presence on both campuses. The campus addresses and phone numbers are listed below. We look forward to seeing you, or hearing from you. May I remind our members incidentally, that they should drop in at the Institute with up-to-date contracts, addresses, etc., within the first two weeks of term.

That's enough from me. Good luck to you all. See you soon.

Soeureinement vôtre, MAIR VERTHUY.

SGW Campus - 2170 Bishop - 879-8521

Loyola Campus - 7079 Terrebonne - 482-0320 ext. 715



Voilà une nouvelle année universitaire. C'est la quatrième pour l'Institut Simone de Beauvoir et la onzième pour les études de la femme. Nous vous souhaitons la bienvenue.

L'année qui débute s'annonce encore plus réussie que celles qui ont précédé. Vous remarquerez que nous avons introduit quelques nouveaux cours (en particulier ESL C301, un cours d'anglais langue seconde pour, bien sûr, les femmes), d'autres ont été remaniés en profondeur (le cours appelé Advanced Seminar in Women's Studies, par exemple, s'est vu doter d'un format nouveau et passionnant.) L'Institut offre aussi cette année pour la première fois, SdB C301/4, the Fellows' Seminar, qui portera sur Madame Simone de Beauvoir elle-même et sa place dans l'histoire des théories féministes.

Il y a aussi toutes nos activités para-universitaires, nos ateliers, nos conférences, nos jasettes. Nous comptons beaucoup sur votre collaboration pour les rendre encore plus intéressants cette année. Sans vous, rien ne se fera. L'événement le plus passionnant sera sans doute le colloque international sur la recherche et l'enseignement relatifs à la femme, voté par le Conseil de l'Institut en Octobre 1980, et qui aura lieu à l'Université Concordia sous l'égide de l'Institut, durant l'été 1982. Un tel colloque qui amènera chez nous des femmes et même des hommes du monde entier, offre à nos membres et à nos ami/e/s une occasion unique de travailler avec des femmes venues d'autres cultures et d'autres régions. Nous allons bientôt inviter nos membres et nos ami/e/s à une réunion où il en sera discuté. Mais encore une fois votre collaboration est essentielle et nous espérons que vous saisierez cette occasion de travailler avec nous.

La participation est à l'ordre du jour. Dans ce contexte, les déléguées étudiantes de l'année dernière vous inviteront bientôt à des élections pour combler les vacances sur nos comités. Je tiens ici à ajouter ma voix à la leur afin de vous encourager à être aussi actives que possible.

Si vous avez des questions à poser sur l'Institut, sur l'Université, sur nos activités, appelez-nous ou venez donc nous voir. Nous nous ferons un plaisir d'essayer de vous aider.

L'Institut a une maison sur chaque campus; l'adresse et le numéro de téléphone sont indiqués ci-dessous. Nous rappellerons à nos membres qu'elles ou ils sont censé/e/s se présenter dans nos bureaux pendant les deux premières semaines du trimestre. Nous nous languissons sans vous!

Il ne me reste plus qu'à vous souhaiter une bonne et heureuse année. Dans l'attente de vous voir, je suis comme toujours,

Soeureinement vôtre,

MAIR VERTHUY  
Directrice.

Campus SGW - 2170 rue Bishop - 879-8521  
Campus Loyola - 7079 rue Terrebonne - 482-0320 Ext. 715



## WOMEN'S STUDIES STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Women's Studies courses, which are offered in most disciplines at Concordia, from Religion to Management, are open to all students. However, all students enrolled in Women's Studies courses are not eligible for membership in the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, which manages the Women's Studies Programs.

A new Association has therefore been formed which will be known as the Women's Studies Students' Association. Its aims and objects are manifold:

- to create and maintain student involvement in the affairs directly or indirectly of students enrolled in Women's Studies courses,
- to maintain a liaison between faculty members of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute and students enrolled in Women's Studies courses,
- to be the voice of students enrolled in Women's Studies courses with the aim of objectively representing the facts of any development in the Women's Studies Programs,
- to represent its membership as required.

Membership in the Women's Studies Students' Association will be open to all students who are in Major, Minor or Certificate Women's Studies Programs, as well as all students enrolled in Women's Studies courses during the current academic year.

Elections for class representatives to the Association will be held within the first two weeks of classes in September. Elections for Executive Association positions will take place toward the end of September.

The role of the Association will be to further the interests of its members within the Simone de Beauvoir Institute in particular, and in the University community as a whole. A full schedule of activities has already been planned, and it is hoped that participation and contribution by students will be enthusiastic.

The most ambitious event planned for the coming academic year is an "Orientation Week" at the end of September. The "week" will consist of three days of special presentations which are aimed at explaining the meaning and purpose of Women's Studies, and which will deal with subjects about and for women. Of special note are:

- a panel on women in the Montreal business community;
- a showing of the film "Le temps de l'avant", and a discussion with its director/producer Anne-Claire Poirier;



## WOMEN'S STUDIES STUDENTS ASSOCIATION cont'd

- a talk by Lise Payette, former Minister of State for the Status of Women.

The balance of the year's events include a Film Night, a workshop on sexual harassment in the University and a contest to design a logo for the W.S.S.A. Although these events have already been partially planned, further input of ideas and experience is more than welcome!

Until a formal Executive is elected, some students have assumed responsibility for planning and organizing the activities of the Association for the coming year. Anyone wishing to contribute time and/or expertise is invited to contact Joan Bercovitch or Réjeanne Lalonde at 879-8521 (the Simone de Beauvoir Institute). A permanent telephone number will be assigned to the W.S.S.A. at the beginning of the 1981-82 academic year.

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TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF ORIENTATION DAYS EVENTS

Thursday, September 17	Simone de Beauvoir Welcome Back Party
Wednesday, September 23 (1-3pm)	Women in the Montreal Business Community -- Panel Discussion
(8pm)	Why Women's Studies? -- Panel Discussion with prominent Women's Studies academics from Concordia, McGill and UQAM.
Thursday, September 24 (12-2pm)	Rape Crisis Lecture
(8pm)	Film Showing -- "Le Temps de l'avant" Anne-Claire Poirier, director and producer in attendance for discussion
Friday, September 25 (11-1pm)	Discussion with Lise Payette -- Former Minister of State for the Status of Women
(8pm)	Penny Lang Coffee House Evening

A Women's Studies and Simone de Beauvoir display will be held on the Hall Building Mezzanine throughout the three days with Audio-Visual presentations coordinated with the days' events.

A final schedule of events and locations will be available soon.



Well, it's been a busy summer! After having reorganized ourselves and redefined our goals and priorities as Women's Studies students and members of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, the summer was spent in the logistics and (sigh) bureaucracy of establishing the Women's Studies Students' Association. As our first project, a group of us set the wheels turning for the Women's Studies Orientation Days to be held from the 23rd to the 25th of September. Further details about the Orientation Days are contained elsewhere in this Bulletin.

All is going well (much to our surprise!), and several other activities are foreseen for the coming year. Among these are included a feminist film night, guest lecturers and a workshop on sexual harassment in the University. After having extracted a reasonable budget from CUSA, we are more or less guaranteed the objective means for carrying through our plans.

Alas, nothing is perfect! Our main problem now is loneliness. We need help (badly) in the planning and coordinating of these activities and of any others you may deem equally or more important. Perhaps most pressing is the need for student representation on Simone de Beauvoir Institute (the Women's Studies department) committees, and, needless to say, on our own Women's Studies Students' Association Assembly and Executive. But don't panic (yet) - more about the details of elections etc. will be passed on to you at the beginning of classes.

In the meantime I would like to stress that if you have any questions, concerns, criticisms or whatever else, please give us a call at the Institute. For those of you who are returning, it will give us a chance to hear your reactions to, and suggestions for, our activities. For those of you who are new students, a phone call or drop-in would let us get to know each other, would get you involved in Women's Studies and would probably help to dispel the anxieties etc. that usually accompany a new start.

So, until then, I wish you a happy and successful year and look forward to seeing you soon.

Joan Bercovitch  
Student Representative



Après une année où nous nous sommes réorganisées et où nous avons redéfini nos objectifs et priorités comme étudiant/e/s en études de la femme et comme membres de l'Institut Simone de Beauvoir, l'été fut passé à établir l'Association des étudiant/e/s en études de la femme. Pour notre premier projet un groupe d'entre nous a mis en marche les journées d'orientation d'études de la femme qui se passeront du 23 au 25 septembre. Tous les détails concernant les journées d'orientation se trouvent ailleurs dans ce bulletin.

Tout va bien (qui est surprenant!), et plusieurs activités sont perçues pour l'année prochaine. Entre-elles se trouvent une soirée de films féministes, des invitées et un atelier sur l'harcèlement sexuel à l'Université. Ayant obtenu un budget raisonnable de CUSA, nous serons donc en mesure d'exécuter la plupart de nos idées.

Hélas, rien n'est parfait et notre problème majeur est la solitude. On a besoin d'aide (gravement) pour réaliser la conception et la coordination de ces activités et d'autres dont vous jugerez également ou plus importantes. Peut-être même plus urgent est le besoin de représentation étudiante sur les comités de l'Institut Simone de Beauvoir (le département des études de la femme) et, inutile de le dire, comme membres de l'Assemblée et l'Exécutif de l'Association des étudiant/e/s en études de la femme. Mais ne vous affollez pas! On vous fera parvenir les détails concernant les élections au début des classes.

Entretemps, si vous avez des questions, des soucis, des critiques ou autres, n'hésitez pas de nous appeler à l'Institut. Pour celles/ceux d'entre vous qui revenez à l'Université, ça nous donnera la chance d'entendre vos réactions et suggestions relatifs à nos activités. Pour celles/ceux d'entre vous qui sont à l'Université pour la première fois, ça nous donnera la chance de vous rencontrer, de vous inclure dans nos projets et pourrait aussi aider à chasser les ennuis qui accompagnent un nouveau départ.

Donc, à bientôt, et permettez-moi de vous souhaiter une année scolaire plein de succès.

Joan Bercovitch  
Représentante étudiante



HOW DID A MAN END UP DOING A SPECIAL MASTER'S PROGRAM ON THE PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATING CONTEMPORARY QUEBEC FEMINIST LITERATURE INTO ENGLISH?

by Howard Scott

How did a man end up doing a special master's program on the problems of translating contemporary Québec feminist literature into English? This is a question I have often encountered in the past months. It is a predictable question, but one thing I learned in women's studies courses at Concordia is that not only is there no reason why men should not take an interest in improving the lot of the majority of humanity, but it is necessary that they do so. We have much to learn from the women who have begun in recent years to seriously question our sexist society, to talk of what a new world could be. For society to change, for human relations among women and men to change, men must change as well as women, and in large part, they must change themselves (though with the continuing example and support of feminist women). Someday soon we men will hopefully begin talking as honestly and as fruitfully of ourselves and our place in human society, as women have been talking of and among themselves.

After this brief foreword, I will now go on to say something about my master's program itself. It began as a project in a French feminist literature course. Myself and three other students in the last year of the French Department's undergraduate translation program, Maureen Sullivan, Tima Newman and Wendy Johnston, began a team translation of the novel, L'Euguélionne, by the Québec writer, Louky Bersianik. This combined our studies in translation with our interest in the new feminist literature being produced by writers in French; writers such as Christiane Rochefort and Héléne Ouvrard, Nicole Brossard and Louky Bersianik in Québec. This work is unique in that the writing is not only a vehicle for the ideas and feelings of the writers, but is also involved in that expression in the forms of the writing themselves. Language and society are closely linked, two sides of the same coin. Language is a vehicle for expression and communication and as such a weapon for any kind of social transformation ("The pen is mightier than the sword," as the old saying goes), but at the same time it restricts that expression. To a large extent, the ways in which we perceive the world, form our ideas and express ourselves are limited and even pre-determined by the structures and built-in assumptions of our languages. Languages, practically all languages it would appear, are sexist. Feminists are faced with the dilemma of being obliged to use a language which, in a sense, is working against them before they start. The American poet, Adrienne Rich, wrote, "this is the oppressor's language/yet I need to talk to you" ("The Burning of Paper Instead of Children" from The Will to Change, 1971). But, while Rich attacked languages and uses language innovatively in her poems, in her non-fiction prose I have read, her language is "standard". She does not do what the new feminist writers have been doing in French. What they have been attempting to do, with a large degree of success in my view, is to "deconstruct" language, to transform it



HOW DID A MAN END UP DOING .....cont'd

for their own needs by breaking down conventions of literary syntax and vocabulary and by breaking down the conventional barriers between literary and spoken language, between poetry and prose, fiction and non-fiction, intellect and feeling.

I had already thought how interesting it would be to try to translate this kind of writing into English, and possibly useful too since it would expose English-speaking women and men to it. However, I felt that as a man I was hardly qualified to interpret and recreate (which is what translation involves, particularly with literary texts) the women's experience, feelings and ideas expressed in these texts. But when the idea of team translation was suggested, I jumped at the opportunity, and in actual practice I found that I could contribute, working in collaboration with women. The idea of team translation is itself somewhat experimental, and while it may have certain inconveniences (apparently trivial points can be subject to time-consuming and sometimes insoluble disagreements), it proved to be an extremely effective method. In dealing with unconventional writing in French, there is no conventional way of translating, no clear equivalent of form and content in English to serve as a guide, and the pooling of ideas, knowledge and experience seems to work very well. The original team translated the first section of L'Eugénie as a project for the course and published the beginning of the second section in Canadian Women's Studies/les Cahiers de la femme, spring/printemps, 1979, vol. 1, no. 3, p.71-75.

The project grew into an idea for a collective, interdisciplinary master's degree at Concordia, combining actual translations of feminist texts into English with course work in French and English literature, philosophy and linguistics, and theoretical work on the specific translation problems encountered in our work. The idea received the necessary approval of the academic powers-that-be, but for a variety of personal and financial reasons, the three women in the group did not continue with it. As a result, I find myself alone, a man, doing a rather unique degree in women's studies. But not really alone. One of the team, Tima, has continued with the actual translation by mail from California where she is now studying. Without a fellowship and not permitted to work in this country since she is an American, Tima could not continue at Concordia, but she has maintained her involvement. This is fortunate for me since, as I said above, I feel that the direct collaboration of women in the translation of this kind of feminist writing is essential.

With this project, I am learning a lot personally, and I hope that at the same time, I can make some small contribution to the understanding of language and translation and to the exchange of ideas among feminists.

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# A DAY OF REST

God is a woman! the feminists cry,  
But any fool knows that's a terrible  
lie.

He toiled for six days, spent the  
seventh in heaven;  
If God were a woman, she'd have  
toiled the full seven.

After 85 hours of executive  
meetings,  
Bedmaking, laundry, errands and  
feedings,  
Arranging for sitters and dental  
appointments,  
Shopping for groceries and passing  
out ointments.

Saturday's spent catching up on the  
chores -  
Like ironing, dusting and waxing the  
floors.  
Then Sunday means hours preparing  
the dinner -  
The weekend's no end, it's just a  
beginner.

God can't be a woman, as some  
people say,  
Or He wouldn't have needed to rest  
on that day,  
'Cause since time first began, and  
we women know best,  
Only children and man - and God -  
need a rest!

by Janet Foster  
Tottenham, Ontario.

(reprinted from 'Today' Magazine, August 1, 1981)

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GREETINGS FROM THE 'PINK COLLAR JUNGLE' by Lily Pearson

Greetings from the 'pink collar jungle' where it all looks so elegant and civilized and all abuse is dealt through very fine little needles, mainly when your back is turned. It is hardly safe to go out for lunch. I walk on wall-to-wall carpet, the air conditioning is operating from some invisible source, I have only to adjust my personal climate-control button; the wallpaper (my choice) is hung with paintings that I chose. Even the telephone at my elbow is colour co-ordinated to make me happy. Nobody says when to sit or stand or take a break. When I need office supplies, I order them. There is a kitchen at our disposal and the company supplies a coffee maker and a refrigerator and free coffee, fruit, milk, etc. I make medical, dental and hairdresser's appointments during office hours. Nobody cares! The president considers offspring to be of a paramount importance; even during a meeting, when there are "no calls", children are exempt. My hours have been staggered so that I could take a class during the day. I get four weeks' paid vacation and three weeks salary as a Christmas bonus. When one of my daughters had a minor fall at school and was sent for x-rays, a company car with a driver went with me to the hospital, took my daughter home, and me back to the office. We close at two thirty every Friday. We spend hours every day paying visits to each other's offices - it is lonely. The company supplies part-time work for my daughters and summer jobs. There is no union, no pension plan, and sick and social leave, the twelve days given, never increase, and can be cancelled in a blink if the president wakes up in a bad mood. The only way I keep from telling the truth is to keep reminding myself, that this kind of job is hard to find; and with one sentence will probably be off the premises the same day. I will never be replaced by a man; it would be costly.

Ten years ago I was newly separated, unskilled, and moon-lighting to pay the rent. When I look back to the days when my paycheque read, \$53.54 in 1971, and I was not scared, it scares the hell out of me. I knew my ex-husband somehow would never pay child support and I also knew there was no way to make him. My attorney seized his pay one week, and he became "too sick to work". What actually happened was that the 'boys' joined forces; they took his name off the payroll and he was paid cash. (the proceeds from the seizure were a few dollars less than the incurred expense involved, so that was that). My daytime job was in Cote St. Paul. I lived in Chomedey, which involved three to four hours in transit a day, and then I worked four evenings and Saturday mornings in order to make ends meet.

How did I get from there to here? Would you believe I have a fairy godmother? How about a sugar daddy? A rich aunt left me a great fortune? I won a lottery? It would have been lovely, but, alas, dear readers, and it hurts me more than it hurts you, none of the above came to be.

There was an ad in the Montreal Star one day for somebody who was

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GREETINGS FROM cont'd

familiar with computers and could compose their own letters, and answer a 32-line telephone at a school board office, within walking distance of my home. The ad said, "Please apply in your own handwriting." In truth, a friend coerced me into writing, because I had had the experience of writing for jobs, where a form letter comes back six months later, thanking you for your interest, etc., but the position had been filled. Within the week I was working at the board office. Six weeks later I was fired. Not just fired, asked to vacate the premises in thirty minutes. Total madness! I expressed an opinion! One of the members of the school board was openly declaring his intentions of checking out the library at one of the local high schools before his favourite son started attending classes there, and cleaning out anything he didn't think the little darling should read. As he went by me, I handed him a book of matches, with the suggestion that he'd need the tools to do the job properly. To this day I have no idea what possessed me. I suppose that if I had had to worry, at the time, about next month's rent, I would have controlled myself. But, luckily, I was living at the time, with a very high priced corporate 'biggie' and was temporarily fearless. Besides, I was being nagged about keeping two jobs, for no reason running around like a 'chicken without a head on' more out of habit than need. So, I stayed at home for a few months, keeping only the evening job twice a week. Do you want to hear how the great, passionate love affair of the century ended? Let us go back to the beginning.

I grew up two blocks from St. Laurent, on St. Urbain Street (the breeding ground of some great writers). When Fred Rose ran in Cartier, he spoke in our living room (double parlour) with speakers attached to the front of that glorious firetrap so the people on the street could hear (I am somehow related to his wife). When Fred went to prison his wife and daughter stayed with us for some months. Their daughter, Laura, really considered herself above me and ignored me as best she could. She was immune from abuse; somehow she had become a minor celebrity. Timid mouse, that I was, I was the recipient of all the abuse, verbal and some physical. My parents were busy with 'red' organizations and unions. I remember as a teenager wanting two things, respectability and invisibility. I remember standing in front of the bookcase when I had a boy in the house, so that he couldn't see 'those books'.

Never think that my dreams did not come true. I married, by nineteen, and I married respectability with a capital 'R'. By twenty-two I had two children, a custom designed house, and my own black Cadillac. (It took the better part of a day every week to polish all the silver) and a smug, opinionated, ward-healing, third-generation Liberal bagman of a moronic bore for a husband. The idiot thought I was great and brought an endless stream of these 'sub-humans' to the house to be impressed by my glib tongue. I woke up one morning and started to tell the truth, an attack of nausea, I expect. I really had not known that respectability consisting of democracy in action was a combination of bribery, coercion, that everything was 'fixed' and pre-arranged. My husband's top dress drawer was full of traffic tickets, to be fixed. I



GREETINGS FROM cont'd

really thought that I was living in the 'magic kingdom'. A policeman apologized for disturbing me, after I had made an illegal turn. To this day, older Laval policemen, who do not know any better, instantly stop traffic for me, when I appear, and tip their hats. One evening when my husband was not at home, this 'pig' showed up and announced that he was running for the school board and wanted our support. I told him if he was elected, I'd move out of the jurisdiction, lest one of my children went to a school he had something to say about. Hubby was livid! THEN I committed the ultimate, unforgivable sin. I refused to vote at a Liberal Federation meeting. As I sat there one man nominated from a list, and another seconded, and everybody voted and laughed uproariously. All I asked for was somebody to explain what was going on. I was told to vote when my husband voted. I said that since I was paying a babysitter and he had two arms, he could vote for two, and I would go home. Phhhhhht! Fini! Funny things happened. The Liberal Federation, the Young Liberals and the Liberal women failed to renew my memberships. I couldn't get through to Noel Lavoie. I couldn't get through to Jean Rochon. I was out! I thought it was wonderful! My better half was not delighted. In any case a divorce was pending.

After the divorce, I absolutely gloried in my independence, I enjoyed the poverty. When I was really broke, I sold diamond rings. (An aunt of mine saved the silver by giving me money for it and then giving me the silver as a birthday present). I was enjoying every minute of it.

When the love affair of the century began, we were both poor and, I thought, both enjoying it. I was wrong. The man was a borderline genius. Suddenly money was pouring in and he was lamenting the 'bad old days'. I was driving a black monster again. His business ethics terrified me. Here we went again! Politically, he was three steps right of John Birch. I was evolving into a person, screaming all the way. It finally came to me that between my father, and my ex-husband and my lover, all so sure that they were right, I had to start making value judgements by myself. The only way I could pit my IQ against his was by screaming. How do you win an argument when you are not cerebrally equipped for the fray? Scream! He packed his clothes and left.

I went to work at my evening job, and my boss' wife noticed me, and opined that I looked like death. "What is wrong with you?" I told her that I would call her when I returned home. At the end of a very long telephone call, I mentioned that I was in no condition to go job hunting and she said that I was an answer to her prayers. "Please come in Monday morning."

Maybe I do have a fairy godmother. A year later, the controller suggested that a person who becomes emotionally involved in so many lives, should not be in personnel work. Why didn't I take

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some bookkeeping courses, and let her retire in peace. So I took some bookkeeping courses (Manpower) in the evenings. When the advanced course was cancelled for insufficient enrollment, a teacher suggested that with a 98% average, I could do better taking accounting at a CEGEP. I went to register for Accounting 1, and was told that tuition was \$75.00, but, if I took four courses it would be free. He really suggested that I register and then drop the other three. That did not make much sense; so two years later I had a DEC from Vanier College in Commerce.

When the time came to apply for admission to Concordia, I realized I had led myself down the 'garden path' again. I do not want to go on manipulating numbers for profit; it makes no sense, and it is a waste of time and energy. I am really in a perfect job. I do not give a damn if the corporation makes another million or not. Therefore, there is no stress involved and I can go to school at night relaxed. Psychology is not easy tacked on to the end of a tense day. (I enrolled in Psychology instead of Commerce).

What did I learn from this course? I had forgotten that not everybody leads a charmed life. It may have been 'second-generation syndrome'. I had remembered all my parent's stories about sweat shops and the horrors of the QPF and the skull cracking, as most people do their parents' stories - as history.

My grandmother told stories about programs. When I was a young child we were poor. So was everybody else. It was alright. I had been poor. I lost touch with reality. You gave it back. I considered poverty, as being short of funds. I had lost touch with ignorance, with not knowing the language of the people, with lack of education, with poor health, with not having a friend who is a doctor, or a friend who is an attorney. I had really viewed immigrants as kind of cute, that each new wave of immigration takes a while to adjust, their children go to school; the second generation fits right in, has free schooling, Medicare, Denticare and everything is soon 'hunky-dory'. I had re-paved the streets with gold. After all it was no longer the dirty thirties. Unions were as corrupt as big business. Every time some 'male' union struck, they would make a little more money, probably undeservedly, at my inconvenience. I had done income tax returns for a few teachers; and they could refrain from crying around me and my female salary. The psychology department was filling my brain with good evidence, statistics, charts, graphs, and objectivity.

Thank you! You brought me back to earth with a thud. You reminded me about real exploitation, that there are still people without resources or the knowledge thereof, breathing noxious fumes, working for less than minimum wage, who do not know what to do about it, and that there are still unions worth fighting for and saving. Mainly, you reminded me that all unions are not the SIU.

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GREETINGS FROM cont'd

I am disturbed about the lack of unions in places where they are sorely needed. The union movement, like the women's movement seems to be stagnant as we suffer through another political swing to the right, and tread water, hoping not to drown or be drowned. I had been frustrated that women were still serving coffee, and that men still held the upper hand in the marketplace. This course has raised issues in my mind much more crucial, and now I'm really frustrated, because I cannot think of one constructive thing I can do about it. And, maybe, psychologists are not crucial to the community, or maybe I'm wasting my time studying it; it may be almost as unproductive as profiteering manipulation, in any case, for me.

Permission was given by Lily Pearson to reprint this paper. It was written by Lily for the course WMNS C393/1 - Social Change: Women in Modern Society II (Women and Unions) - the instructor was Danielle Dionne.

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## LE BULLETIN

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# FRANÇOISE GIROUD - WOMAN OF THE PEOPLE

by S.E. Stewart

On Wednesday, May 20, the Simone de Beauvoir Institute hosted a reception and press conference for Françoise Giroud, author, politician, publisher, and hot-line to the populace. A group of students and professors joined local journalists in the Institute Lounge to ask her about her careers in writing, media and politics and to listen to her views on her latest work, Une Femme honorable, a biography of Marie Curie recently published in Québec by Librairie Hachette (Canada) Ltée.

Françoise Giroud constitutes some kind of natural phenomenon. One glance will tell you she is collected, serious, business-like, definitely in control and able to handle any situation she encounters. Her life experience endorses the initial impression: this small, elegant woman started her career as a script-girl, became editor of Elle and co-founder of L'Express, and recently served as a cabinet minister in France. In addition, she shared her insights and experiences with the public as she went along through a series of books containing memoirs, personal notes and pointed observations couched in a style both informal and informative.

Giroud's latest book represents something of a departure from her earlier work in that she has switched from the subjective and from the immediate present to the past. She confessed that when she was first approached to write a new biography of the scientific pioneer Marie Curie, she felt little excitement at the prospect of re-working a story that could be categorized as a lengthy cliché. However, further exploration revealed to her much of interest and much that had been ignored or distorted to the detriment of a courageous and progressive female figure. Drawing contemporary relevance from old material, she proceeded with her usual enthusiasm to inform the public and set the record straight.

In describing to her listeners some of the barriers Curie had to overcome and the glaring examples of discrimination she encountered as a scientist, a teacher and a free thinker, Giroud gave the impression that she had found in her biographic subject a sympathetic companion in arms whose battles have a fresh significance for us in a modern context.

By divesting Marie Curie of the various guises created by an unsympathetic historical tradition and a weighty literary one, Giroud continues to afford us insights and views of immediate relevance in a contemporary, accessible style, the difference being that in this case she is speaking to us on behalf of another, a fellow pioneer. And in spite of the more formal genre she has taken on in the biography, she continues to address herself plainly and clearly to the general public.



## UPDATE ON OUR UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The International Conference on Research and Teaching on Women is alive and well at - 12 months! So far, yet so near! We don't know whether to snow you with what has been accomplished or intrigue you with what remains to be done. Briefly then, let me give you a little of both.

First, the funding campaign is progressing very well. We have obtained approximately 80% of our operating budget and now have to concentrate on getting funds for delegates' travel expenses. This is essential, if we are to have the balanced geographic representation that we seek.

Secondly, we now have a permanent part-time staff. I (Line Robillard-Heyniger) am the conference coordinator, Sue Stewart the assistant and Adèle Keyes-Lessard is the secretary. Mair, of course, oversees and pitches in as much as possible and everybody else at the Institute is getting involved. Two rooms on the third floor of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute are now reserved for the conference so we are now in full operation.

In addition to seeking funds - a very time-consuming process - the conference staff has been busy establishing a mailing list of key women around the world who are specialists in research or teaching on women's issues. This is not an easy task, since no such list exists anywhere and since, as you know, such persons are buried in various departments or organizations not necessarily oriented exclusively on women's issues. Having established a core list, to which we are constantly adding, we wrote to all these persons asking for their reaction to the project and for their suggestions as to program content. We feel it is extremely important for us to go through this process so that in the end the program will reflect the concerns of all women rather than be dictated by the narrower perspective of one particular group of women. Replies to our questionnaire were coming in at a good pace until June 29 when we were cut off from the world! It is exciting to see the enthusiasm with which many women from so many different countries have greeted the news of our project. Several wrote lengthy letters telling us of their interests and offering to help identify participants in their area.

On the Canadian front, we have formed a Montreal planning group which includes representatives from all four Montreal universities. This group is now examining all the replies to the questionnaire and will work on establishing a program for the conference. We have also started contacting researchers and teachers in all parts of Canada and expect to continue this process in the next few months. What lies ahead? A lot. After the program is established we will have to call for papers, review them, invite speakers, plan for public sessions, organize parallel activities such as film showings, art exhibits, concerts, book exhibits, hospitality. Funding permitting, we plan to hold a Canadian planning meeting, to define both participation and follow-up, and an international planning meeting. Anyone interested in working on any aspect of the conference should call the Institute and speak to the conference staff.

LINE ROBILIARD-HEYNIGER

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MOTTO FOR THE DAY: Contributions to stereotypes are not tax-deductible.